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PRESS COMMENT ON SHORTCOMINGS

PRAVDA covers the usual wide range of public economic and political activities, placing a little more than usual stress on the Komsomol and on ideological matters in general. The Soviet engineer, acknowledged representative of the Soviet intelligentsia, is taken to account (2 June) for his "impersonal attitude to progressive suggestions and ... inadequate support of creative initiative." The editorial reminds the engineer that he is responsible "for putting into practice all discoveries of science and technology," and hints that he has so far failed to live up to that responsibility:

Some such engineers have not yet rid themselves of a conservative outlook. (They are) lacking in principle and show a narrow departmental approach, to the detriment of the interests of the state. This is not to be tolerated.

Transportation.

River transport workers are told (3 June) that they have not yet made up for their shortcomings of last year when the annual plan was "underfulfilled" and that "unproductive idle time of vessels is still considerable; frequently timetables are not maintained and equipment is sometimes inadequately used." They are accordingly reminded of their "duty to the country" professed in the numerous letters to Stalin from the crews of the Volga-Kama and northern basins. "Meanwhile," the editorial concludes, "the shortcomings are numerous." The familiar low standard of Party-political work among the workers is blamed for the "poorly developing" socialist competition, and the political departments on vessels are urged to intensify their activities with a view to remedying the situation, that is, improving the discipline:

... all Party organizations of the river transport are called upon uncompromisingly to ... train the people to a proper sense of responsibility for the work entrusted to them, and to raise them to the struggle for the all-embracing tightening of working discipline.

That the performance of the railway transport is not much better than on inland waterways is attested to by an IZVESTIA editorial (13 June) which complains that both freight and passenger trains, having failed to comply with their tasks last year, are still working behind schedule. Freight cars are said to be "held up for far too long a time, standing idle or waiting to be loaded or unloaded." These waiting periods apparently account for the loss of freight which the papers call inadmissible, urging appropriate measures "to secure the

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preservation of freight and so on." The reference to passenger trains is short but indicative of the situation: "passenger trains must be organized well and exactly. Passengers must be served with attention and care."

Party activities.

PRAVDA's sharpest barbs are aimed at the Smolensk and Orel oblast Party committees ("Judge Workers by the Results of Their Work", 4 June) for the familiar "serious shortcomings" in their work with cadres and their "complacent attitude" toward the mistakes of the workers. The Smolensk Party leadership is told that "the overlooking of mistakes and a liberal-minded attitude to them only spoils workers and leads to fresh mistakes," and the Orel Party committee is accused of complacency--a euphemism for patronage--toward "the serious mistakes of certain workers." What sounds like the practice of passing out political plums (in the Western sense) and maintaining a negative attitude toward women in public office is revealed by PRAVDA's remark on promotions:

One of the major mistakes in the practice of Party committees in the selection and training of cadres is that they rely entirely on a close circle of workers, and are quite unjustifiably afraid of bringing to the fore young cadres, especially women.

Propaganda, Party education and Communist ideology in general form the subject of three PRAVDA editorials (9, 10 and 12 June) and of a KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA editorial of 9 June. The claim that Party organizations are paying inadequate attention to the training and work of propagandists is supported by the fact that "last year propaganda lectures delivered in some oblasts were unconstructive and feeble in build-up." (9 June).

The poor training of young Communists (recent Komsomol graduates and now candidates for Party membership) is deplored and is attributed to the fact that Party officials, whose duty it is to prepare them for membership, treat them as a mass rather than individuals, and are little concerned with their ability and performance:

Each one of them must be trained individually Too many of these young Communists find themselves too long in "candidate" ranks The candidate period, though essential ... should not be prolonged. (10 June).

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA is less lenient with the fledgling Communists and pleads for less arrogance on their part. It appears that not all the Komsomols are convinced of the advantages of propaganda, that is persuasion, over different methods which might only mean coercion:

There are still Komsomol workers who are indifferent to the fate of their comrades. A Komsomol worker who does not value people is unworthy to be a leader of youth. Such people should be reminded that the main method in Komsomol work is that of persuasion. (9 June).

The compatibility of ideological purity with clashing opinions is treated in the PRAVDA editorial of 12 June which cautions true Bolsheviks against ideological distortions, on the one hand, and quotes Stalin as approving of divergent opinion in matters of science, on the other. That science in the Soviet Union is not divorced from Communist doctrine and ideology has been amply demonstrated during the recent purge of scientists for "cosmopolitanism," agreeing with Western scientists--particularly on biology, or doubting the approved Michurin theories. The editorial asserts that "lack of political outlook" is severely criticized by the public:

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Our Party teaches that ideological work ... must aim first and foremost ... toward the strengthening of Bolshevik immunity to all kinds of ideological distortion.

With particular force Comrade Stalin stressed that "no science can develop and make progress without a clash of opinion, without freedom of criticism."

Soviet writers, literary and art workers have not and cannot have any other interests but ... the interests of the State. This is why a deviation from the truth of life, the slightest display of lack of political outlook, the lack of idea content ... are justifiably and severely criticized by the Soviet public.

Socialist competition.

Bureaucracy, or worse, in socialist competition is the object of editorial censure on 5 June. The reluctance of industrial officials to sponsor and maintain socialist competition among the workers, individually and collectively, is revealed in the fact that "some heads of undertakings, ministries and departments try to substitute the vital and concrete leadership of competition by administration." The Ministry of Communications is rebuked for adopting "this obviously mistaken course," and "faulty leadership" of competition is said to have become entrenched in a number of mines of the Voroshilov Coal Trust in the Donets Basin. As a result of this, the editorial claims, "... the mines of the Voroshilov Trust have under-delivered (this year) by tens of thousands of tons of coal." An interesting allusion to the mechanics of making pledges in socialist competition is contained in the reference to faulty leadership:

It is precisely this which explains the fact that at several mines the pledges made in the socialist competition are completely unknown to some of the workers.

The voluntary nature of socialist competition is inadvertently, and unequivocally, disproved in a short news item from Baku, Azerbaijan (4 June) saying that the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party "decreed that a socialist competition ... should be entered into by the stock-breeders of the Azerbaijan and Armenian SSRs."

Agriculture.

Figure juggling by collective farm managers and lax control over the farms by local Party organizations are deplored by the PRAVDA editorial of 7 June which says that "frequently enough favorable average figures conceal from view the farms that are lagging behind." Obviously alluding to the collective farmers who devote more of their attention and energy to their individual land allotments than to the collective farm, a recurrent charge on the Soviet radio, the editorial warns that:

Each farmer must be made to understand that the interests of the state come above all else, that public property and economy and collective labor form the basis of the collective farm system.

Another weak spot in Soviet agriculture, the machine-tractor stations, is attacked by the editorial of 14 June, with the Kursk and Voronezh oblasts as the chief targets. The charge against the Kursk oblast has to do with the familiar reluctance of the officials and/or farmers to work their machinery to capacity, while the agricultural engineers of Voronezh oblast are blamed for low labor productivity:

In 1950 one quarter of the available tractors in the Kursk oblast were allowed to remain idle. This year, a large number of tractors are again idle, and the work in the fields is being delayed.

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In the Voronezh oblast, many of the rayon Party committees seldom concern themselves with the work of the machine-tractor station. ... The Party organizations ... do not exert sufficient influence on the work of the agricultural engineers to see to the increase in the productivity of labor

The chronic PRAVDA complaint about low labor productivity is dealt with more specifically in the editorial of 13 June which inferentially discloses the understandable reluctance of the workers to step up their productivity and the necessity of prodding to greater efforts:

The correct use of these means of increasing the productivity of labor must lead to the establishment of progressive technical norms, a sliding-scale for the productivity of labor demanding that the backward workers should be trained to approach the output capacity of the more advanced workers

The Interests of the State Above All.

PRAVDA's earlier reminder to Soviet officials that, despite all the references to the "greatness" of the Soviet individual and the "new man" produced by the Soviet society, the interests of the state remain paramount, is echoed by the RADYANSKA UKRAINA (SOVIET UKRAINE) on 7 June. This paper, moreover, goes somewhat further in its admonition to Ukraine officials by discussing the negligent attitude toward the interests of the state in the context of treason. Although the editorial argument is along the general line of "neglect of the interests of the state," it leaves no doubt that resistance to mechanization of labor is what matters most. Referring to the poor work done by the Voroshilovgrad oblast Coal Mine Administration, the editorial quotes a letter received by the RADYANSKA UKRAINA saying that:

... the director of the mine administration, Comrade Davydov, does not care at all about the utilization of the machines. The machines are standing idle and the workers are working with their hands.

The grave implication of such an "attitude" is further emphasized by placing it in the category of anti-state activity which, in the Soviet view, is the nearest equivalent to treason:

Davydov surrounded himself with cells which in collaboration with some workers ... have begun anti-state machinations. The Ministry of the Local Fuel Industry of the Ukrainian SSR has good reasons to take a serious view of this practice The Party organizations, ministries and their departments must treat such practice with severity. (7 June)

The deliberate concealment of state property is no less serious than resistance to mechanization and the same editorial points an accusing finger in that direction also:

Some economic leaders erroneously think that any resources in their stores, not entered in the lists of stocks, are their personal property.

Since the names of the particular economic leaders are not mentioned, the presumption is that there are a number of them and that their erroneous thinking is more or less widespread. Castigated also are the "deliberately high-sounding reports" which those economic leaders send to the head administrations and ministries which, incidentally, are also said to be lax in their duties for "not carefully checking the truth of the reports."

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Distribution of consumer goods.

The interests of Soviet consumers are normally far down the scale of priorities, but, according to the same RADYANSKA UKRAINA (14 June), the Ukrainian consumers have been given an exceptionally bad time by their food and cooperative industry. "Deterioration" in their work is the blanket charge leveled against all the trade organizations, or retail outlets (torguyuschie organizatsii), of the Ukraine, and the Ministry of Trade is told that it has so far failed to do anything but "register these facts." Adversely mentioned is the distribution of building materials, salt, matches and "other staple articles" which are not to be found in many retail stores. The reason given for these shortcomings is the "very bad" system of personnel recruitment, but the size of the area affected suggests that officials higher than "recruited personnel" may have something to do with it:

... the trade organizations of the Ukraine have deteriorated in their work of late Trade is especially bad in Kamenets-Podolsk, Zaporozhie, Dnepropetrovsk and some other oblasts The Ministry of Trade of the Ukrainian SSR certainly knows the bad work of certain supply organizations.

RADYANSKA UKRAINA also calls attention to the shortage of restaurants in "a number of towns, among them Kiev," and wonders why the Main Public Catering Administration is opening inadequate buffets instead of good restaurants. Here, again, the culprits remain unnamed but are referred to as cheaters and swindlers:

Apart from the fact that some trade organizations have a very bad system of recruiting personnel, there are cheaters and swindlers in the shops and distributing centers.

Kazakh SSR.

KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA lists a multitude of shortcomings in the Republic, particularly in agriculture. Also criticized are slow housing construction, poor Komsomol education, and suppression of criticism. The housing situation is said to be deplorable because "in the Republic as a whole the state plan is not being fulfilled." (6 June) Curiously enough, the local Party and soviet organizations, always held ex officio responsible for everything wrong in their respective areas, are not blamed this time:

A large part of the blame for this situation rests on the Ministry of Meat and Dairy Industries which failed to provide the builders with approved drafts and designs. The Ministry of Communal Economy, the Kazakh Oil Construction Industry Trust (Kazneftstroyprom) ... are all carrying out their house-building programs in an unsatisfactory manner.

The tenor of the editorial as a whole is comparatively mild--no reference to "serious shortcomings," "intolerable situation" or "anti-state activity"--which provides a commentary on the official attitude to the welfare of the workers. The guilty ministries are merely told that their planning was inadequate, that is that "blueprints and drafts are often delivered late and are frequently inaccurate." Indeed, the only rebuke for their indifferent attitude toward the people's welfare was the advice that "it is essential to raise the feeling of responsibility among the planning organizations"

Serious shortcomings in the work of Komsomol organizations is charged by the KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA of 7 June which blames them on poor education and guidance:

... there is still room for improvement in the work of educating youth which receives scant attention in certain primary organizations of the Komsomol.

Serious shortcomings in the work of Komsomol organizations are explained by the fact that the level of guidance from oblast and rayon committees is still lagging behind the increasing demands.

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Fodder preparation, until recently the object of a nation-wide campaign, is still one of the sore spots in Kazakh agriculture, according to two KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA editorials (9 and 14 June). The familiar lack of supervision over the implementation of work is again held responsible for the sorry state of affairs:

The Dzhambul oblast Party committee does not lay sufficient stress on the ... implementation of resolutions The Dzhambul oblast has fulfilled the plan for fodder preparation by only 2.6 percent. This is only one of many examples. (9 June).

Taking up the fodder theme again on 14 June, the paper says that it is the duty of all Party, Soviet and agricultural organizations to look into the matter, and that duty was apparently misunderstood by many: "Many organizations of the Republic have failed to realize this point and have not understood the full meaning of haymowing."

Shayakhmetov, secretary of the central committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, speaks of "anti-state squandering of communal resources" and "the grossest infringement of financial discipline" in the machine-tractor stations of the Republic without naming any specific instances--an indication of widespread practice. "All branches of finance must be examined," he says, because "a machine-tractor station cannot be run correctly without a knowledge of finance and economics."

This official also calls attention to the deplorable situation among the Republic's agronomist and mechanical personnel without, however, venturing any explanation for it. These qualified workers are said to be too few and inadequately educated. Further, the personnel turnover approaches catastrophic proportions:

... 2284 agronomists are required whereas only 1570 are available. Of these only 7 percent have higher education ... and 40.6 percent no special education but practical knowledge.

As for mechanics, 2785 are required and 2150 are available. Of these, 2 percent have higher education ... and the rest only practical knowledge.

In 1949, 114 agronomists with higher education came to the machine-tractor stations and stock-breeding farms, and 98 of them left again ... 26 mechanics arrived, and 20 of them left. (10 June)

The recurring charge that a number of Party organizations are antagonistic to criticism and self-criticism is brought with renewed force against the Turkestan Rayon Party Committee which is told that such practice smacks of bourgeois morality. That such self-criticism applies not merely to present or past performance on the job but also to the elimination of "capitalist thought"--which, may account for the reluctance to "self-criticize"--is admitted at the very outset of the KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA editorial of 12 June:

Criticism and self-criticism are the means by which the Party struggles against the remains of capitalist thought and against all shortcomings which hamper progress.

Criticizing one's self for poor work may bring about an official rebuke or, at worst, a minor penalty. Capitalist thought, on the other hand, is a cardinal sin, even if divulged by way of self-criticism. Hence, the popular aversion to self-criticism and the necessity of constant official encouragement.

Industry.

The Rostov and Voroshilovgrad oblasts get most of the criticism for the idleness and inefficiency of machine and man, and the rest of official censure, for a variety of shortcomings, is more or less equally distributed among Stavropol, Stalino, Orel, Erevan (Armenian SSR), Odessa and Tashkent (Uzbek SSR):

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Rostov, MOLOT editorial, 2 June:

The heads of the (Bykov) coal trust and of the Party and economic organs of many pits do not show Bolshevik care for the creation of the necessary conditions This leads to a situation in which many coal combine machines are idle and the efficiency of machines in general is very low. Such a situation cannot be tolerated.

MOLOT editorial, 8 June (discussing the Volga-Don project):

... the workers in some sectors are not making the utmost use of their equipment and machinery.

The directors and specialists of the first and third building sectors ... must eliminate the serious shortcomings in the organization of labor and accelerate excavation and concrete work without delay.

MOLOT editorial, 10 June:

Unfortunately, there are still organizations and enterprises in the oblast which maintain a bureaucratic and indifferent attitude toward the suggestions and complaints of workers Such a situation cannot be left unattended.

VOROSHILOVGRADSKAYA PRAVDA editorial, 8 June:

The oblast coal industry as a whole is still in debt to the state ... in many mines the socialist competition among workers has a formalistic character. In many mines as much as 40 percent of the coal-cutting machines are idle.

Same paper discussing utilization of local resources (13 June):

Some administrators tend to get from the State as much raw material as possible. They are forgetting that the local industry and industrial cooperatives are destined to use for their production industrial waste and agricultural raw materials This tendency is a crime.

Same paper, 1 June:

In the Belkovo village, Sverdlovsk rayon, there was quite a good movie establishment ... this establishment is being liquidated on the grounds that it is unprofitable.

STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA, 13 June:

Exceptionally alarming is the lag of most of the machine-tractor stations in the fulfillment of the combine repairs.

Odessa, CHERNOMORSKAYA KOMUNA editorial, 7 June:

The Pervomaisk garment enterprise of the oblast local industry has gained notoriety for its lackadaisical attitude toward production tasks ... more than half of the goods had to be classified as second-rate and even third-rate quality. The sleeves were sewn crookedly, there were uneven seams and so on.

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Recently 150 pairs of men's shoes out of 180 pairs examined were classified as low quality.

RADIO REFERENCES TO THE STATE AND ITS ORGANS

The early Bolshevik belief in the withering away of the State after Communism has been established has never been overly stressed in Soviet doctrinal literature. It has never been very clear whether the withering away process was to begin following the institution of Communism in one country, namely the Soviet Union, or throughout the world. But whatever the early Russian Communist may have believed or hoped, the status of the state, with all that that implies, was made clear in the early 30's, shortly after Stalin became established in the Kremlin. Stalin's widely publicized view that Communism can be established in one country had to be reconciled with the continued existence of the State under Communism even though the two were incompatible from the doctrinal point of view. As in many other instances of doctrinal manipulation under Stalin, the irreconcilables were reconciled: official lip service is still paid to the idea of building Communism in one country and the continued existence of the State, its armed forces and intelligence services is assured all at the same time.

In one of the periodic anonymous talks to political school students (first year training) (24 May), the State, that is the bourgeois State, is identified as a "political organization of the dominant class for the suppression of the opposition ..."; for this purpose it maintains such instruments of power as the army, judiciary organs, police etc. The Soviet Socialist State, on the other hand, is said to be "a state where the working people are in power, that is, the majority of the society." And it is necessary "for the purpose of carrying out, to the last, the destruction of the exploiting capitalist system."

There are no references to the withering away of the State or to the time when the State will become superfluous. Instead, the changing functions of the Soviet State are discussed with increasing frequency. Pursuing this theme, the above-mentioned lecturer has this to say to his radio audience of future Communist leaders:

Instead of the function of suppression there emerged the function of protecting socialist property from thieves and embezzlers of national property.

The punitive function remained also in force in order to catch and punish spies, saboteurs and murderers sent to our country by the bourgeois states As to the punitive organs and the intelligence service, they are not directed any more inside the country, but outside--against external enemies.

The functions of the Soviet State and the part it is designed to play in Soviet society is discussed at some length in another anonymous lecture to political school students (second-year training) on 14 June:

The Soviet State is the owner of all the more important and decisive means of production in our country; it directs all branches of national economy ... organizes the work of industry, transport, agriculture, banks, trading and communal enterprises.

The implicit indispensability of the State is seen also in another of its primary functions which is "to stand guard over socialist public ownership ... (which is) a sacred and inviolable foundation of the Soviet system."

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The political school students are also told that the Soviet State will last at least as long as capitalism does, and no inkling is given as to what may happen beyond that time:

The strengthening of our State is also necessary because the Soviet people have to build up Communism ... when capitalism still reigns in many countries of the world.

Apart from the inference that capitalism anywhere in the world is a hindrance to the building up of Communism, there is also the implication of a possible clash between the two systems, though in the familiar Soviet phraseology it is a case of attack and defense:

The Soviet people must always remember the danger of an attack against the USSR by capitalist states, of the possibility that the imperialists will make new attempts to reestablish capitalism in our country. As long as this danger exists, our country must have a powerful army and navy, well organized punitive organs and an intelligence service.

LINGUISTICS

The contrast between theory and practice concerning linguistics is revealed in the following quotations:

Academician Alexandrov in a lecture for students of dialectical and historical materialism:

Comrade Stalin attacks the apologists of the theory that there is no harm in the British and Americans forcibly imposing their language in other countries This would make it considerably easier for the American imperialists to enslave the European peoples. (Home Service, 6 June)

In the Rumanian People's Republic more than 7,000 classes have been organized for the study of the Russian language ... more than 100,000 persons are studying. (Tass, D/S, 14 May)

From Apr. 28 to May 1, over 2,800 courses were organized all over the country for the popularization of the Russian language. (Bucharest, 4 June)

... the great interest of the working people for the Russian language was borne out by the sales figures of Russian text books which reached 500,000 between Sept. 1950 and now. (Minister Slechtsa, chairman, Central Commission for popular Russian language courses, 12 May)

The Hungarian workers are interested in acquiring a knowledge of the Russian language. A number of Russian-language courses were organized for them. (Kiev in Ukrainian, 16 May)

SATELLITE INTELLIGENTSIA

An editorial in FOR A LASTING PEACE, FOR A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY compares the Russian intelligentsia "in the years following the October Revolution" with the present intelligentsia in the satellite countries, and refers to the two as analogous. Just what that analogy means may be inferred from the fact that the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia was completely liquidated "in the years following the October Revolution." Although no such fate is held to be in store for the Satellite intelligentsia, the editorial does not pretend to paint a rosy future for them; they, like their counterparts of pre-revolutionary Russia, are to be replaced with new intellectuals "devoted to the people and fit to promote the economic and cultural life of the country."

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Claiming that "only a small part" of the intelligentsia was on the side of the people and the revolutionary working class, the editorial asserts that the majority of them hastened to embrace the people's cause following the "revolution" in the Balkan countries, but that a considerable "passive" element still remains:

Another part of the intelligentsia works hard but is still passive in the political and public field. Only a very small part of the old intelligentsia is hostile to the people's government. This part has always been and still remains an agency of the enemy. (Moscow, Home Service, 3 June)

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